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STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS ON THE WAR

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# How Austria-Hungary waged war in Serbia

*Personal Investigations of a Neutral*

by

**R.-A. REISS**

Professor at the University of Lausanne

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*Translated by J. S.*

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# HOW AUSTRIA-HUNGARY WAGED WAR IN SERBIA

## PERSONAL INVESTIGATIONS OF A NEUTRAL

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One of the characteristics of the present war is that it has necessitated the mobilisation not only of armies and the sanitary services but also of criminologists. This is the reason why I, as a practical criminologist, was invited by the Serbian Government to visit Serbia to see with my own eyes, and form a judgment upon the conduct of the Austro-Hungarian troops in that unhappy country.

Very shortly after the beginning of the war Serbia cried out in horror at the abominable excesses of which she accused the invading Austro-Hungarian army; but the public, at least in neutral countries, remained sceptical. I confess that I was myself not convinced by reading the Serbian complaints. However, when I received the invitation of the Serbian Government, I believed it to be my duty to accept it. Is it not the duty of an honest man, if cruelties have really been committed, emphatically to denounce them, and if only isolated cases of atrocities have occurred, to point out that a whole army cannot be made responsible for the misdeeds of a few hooligans such as are found among all nations?

I therefore started for Serbia, and I conducted my enquiry with every necessary precaution. I did not limit myself to interrogating hundreds of Austrian prisoners and hundreds

of eye-witnesses; I went to the spot, sometimes with shells bursting around me, to inform myself of everything that it was possible to investigate. I opened graves; I examined the dead and wounded; I visited bombarded towns; I went into houses and I carried on there a scientific enquiry using the most scrupulous methods; in short, I did my utmost to investigate and verify the facts which I report in this work. I will not add to it any useless comments, I will leave my witnesses to tell their own story, and will merely state the facts that I have established. [The reader will form his opinion for himself.

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### *Explosive bullets.*

After the Austrian defeats on the Iadar and the Tzer, Serbian soldiers returning from the front stated that when the enemy fired at them two explosions were heard; the sharp

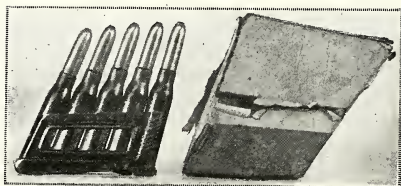


PLATE 1. — Magazine filled with cartridges containing explosive bullets. Cover of the same.

report of the rifle as it was fired, and a second explosion which seemed to occur sometimes behind them and sometimes in front. The explanation of this mystery was soon discovered

in the bandoliers of Austrian prisoners of war. Cartridges were there found which were outwardly exactly like ordinary cartridges, except that they had a black or red ring round the case near the shoulder. On opening these cartridges it was ascertained that they were really explosive bullets, use



The boxes containing the clips which were stocked with these cartridges were labelled with the word *Einschusspatronen* or *10 Stück scharfe Uebungspatronen*. The cartridges came from the State manufactory of Wellersdorf near Vienna and the base of their case bore the date 1912 and the doubled headed Austrian eagle (plate 2).

On opening the cartridge we found the normal charge of

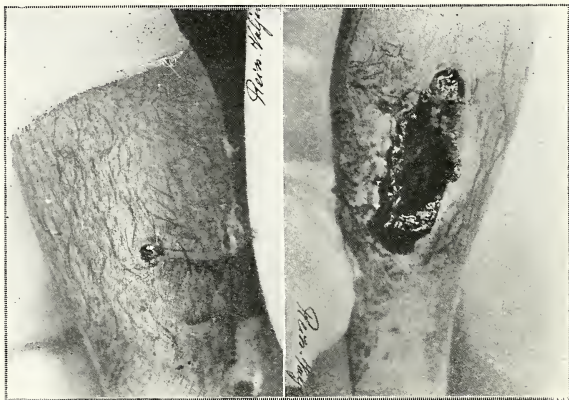


PLATE 5. — Wound caused by an explosive bullet. On the left, the orifice of entry; on the right, the orifice of exit.

powder in the case. The bullet was made up as follows :

The envelope contained lead in the point and in the base of the bullet. The front part of the latter contained in addition a cylindrical chamber surrounded by a thin sheet of lead. This was filled with a compound which has been ascertained by an analysis made at the laboratory of Kragujevatz, to consist of a mixture of compressed black powder and a little aluminium. At the base of the chamber was fixed a percussion cap of fulminate of mercury.

Behind this first chamber there was a second, made of



steel, enclosing a brass tube into which a striker was fitted. If the bullet in its flight is stopped by some obstacle (bone, wood, etc.) the striker, driven forward by its own momentum, strikes the cap, and thus produces the explosion of the powder which in its turn explodes the bullet. Whether the explosion takes place when the bullet encounters the smallest obstacle, or only when it is sharply checked in its flight, depends on the adjustment of the tube, that is to say, on how tightly it fits round the striker and consequently on the degree of freedom with which the latter can operate (plate 2).

This bullet, therefore, has precisely the characteristics of explosive bullets such as have been used up to now only for shooting pachydermatous animals.

I saw a very great number of wounds which had been produced by the *Einschusspatronen*, in hospitals, in the advanced ambulances and even on the field of battle.

In general the orifice of entry is normal and small. The orifice of exit from the body on the other hand is enormous (plate 5) and the flesh is often protruded in the form of a mushroom (plate 4). The inside of the wound is shattered and the bones which have been struck are broken into small splinters. The bullet on exploding inside the body is broken up and its fragments act like shrapnel. To this must be added the effect of the gases. The wounds are therefore very serious. A limb which has been struck by an explosive bullet is almost always lost;



PLATE 4. — Wound caused by explosive bullet (leg). The orifice of exit (in the shape of a mushroom).

a wound in the head or the trunk is inevitably fatal.

Ordinary bullets fired at a very short range may also produce wounds whose orifice is normal at the point of entry and very large at the point of leaving the body ; but these wounds, of which I have seen a very great number, do not tear so large a channel through the body as wounds made by explosive bullets. Besides we have often extracted from the wounds shattered fragments of explosive bullets (plate 5). There is therefore no doubt that these explosive Austrian bullets were used against Serbian soldiers. The number of persons so wounded proves that their use was very frequent. Surgeon-major Lioubischa Voulovitch for example has placed on record 117 cases of wounds caused by explosive bullets at the sixth reserve hospital of Valievo in nine days.

I questioned a large number of Austro-Hungarian prisoners on the use of the *Einschusspatronen*, and their replies led me to put the following facts on record :

1. Cartridges with explosive bullets were used in regiments N<sup>o</sup> 16, 26, 27 (Hungarian), 28, 78, 96 and 100.

2. They were only distributed to the troops towards the middle of December, that is to say after the defeat on the Iadar and Tzer.

3. The soldiers had no knowledge of them before the war : “ They were always shut up in time of peace and their use is reserved exclusively for war ” said the witness, number 27, to me.

4. Several soldiers were told that these cartridges were intended to be used for the purpose of ascertaining the range.

5. An admission was made to many others that they were explosive bullets which produced very serious wounds.

6. Good marksmen and non-commissioned officers received from five to thirty of these cartridges.

When this use of explosive bullets against the Serbians was denounced, the Austrians at first denied the fact but later they confessed that they used special cartridges to get the range. The *Einschusspatronen* were intended to allow of the observation of the range by smoke during the day and

fire by night, smoke and fire being produced by the explosion of the mixture of powder and aluminium contained in the interior chamber of the bullet.

I have made experiments with these cartridges and I believe it to be impossible in reality to get the range by means of the smoke or flame. So far as concerns the smoke, the amount of it is relatively small and it cannot be seen distinctly

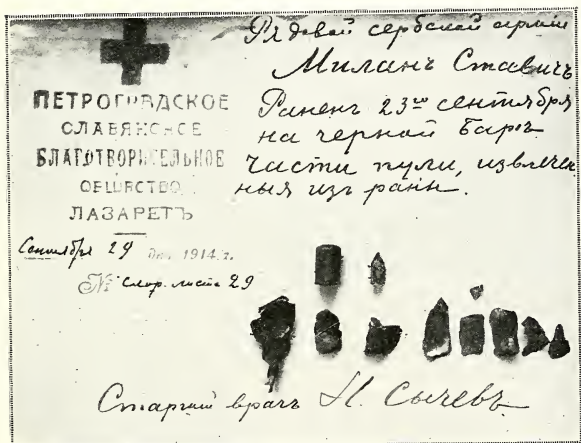


PLATE 5. — Fragments of an explosive bullet extracted from the wound of a Serbian soldier in the Russian hospital at Valievo.

at a great distance. Moreover, just as in the case of the explosive mixtures of aluminium or magnesium employed in photography, the smoke is forced immediately by the explosion of the gases to a height which is more or less great, and the cloud of smoke is only formed at a very considerable distance from the place of the explosion. It is therefore impossible that the smoke could show whether the target has really been hit.

The flame is well seen at night, but how can anyone know

whether it rises from the target aimed at or not? Even when one sees a small fixed light burning in the night it is almost impossible to gauge its distance since the elements for comparison are absent. How therefore can one gauge a distance with the aid of a light which only lasts an instant?

Finally when the explosion occurs in the body of a man, neither flame nor smoke is seen. In that case how can the effect of the shot be ascertained? Only by seeing the fallen man who has been put out of action by a serious wound. The true purpose of the *Einschusspatronen* appears to be

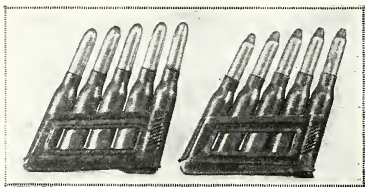


PLATE 6. — Ordinary Austro-Hungarian cartridges; expanding cartridges (dum-dum) found on the fields of battle of Crnabara and Parachnitza.

to put enemy soldiers out of action, for, as Austro-Hungarian prisoners have informed me, they were not forbidden to fire with them on the enemy.

Some soldiers informed me even that they were encouraged to do so,

being told at the same time that they were cartridges with explosive bullets. It is not possible otherwise to explain the fact that these cartridges, which, as it is alleged, were intended to indicate the range, only became known to the soldiers during the war and indeed only after the serious defeat of the Austro-Hungarians on the Iadar and the Tzer.

The Austro-Hungarians have also used expanding bullets (dum-dum) made in 1914. I have in my possession specimens of these cartridges with expanding bullets, much less dangerous than the cartridges with explosive bullets, which were found in boxes on the battlefields of Crnabara and Parasehnitza (plate 6).

***Bombardment of open towns and destruction  
of houses.***

Bombardment of open towns also entered into the programme of the *Strafexpedition* — the Punitive-expedition — as the Austro-Hungarians called it. Thus the towns of Belgrade, Chabatz and Losnitza were bombarded.

I visited these three towns during the bombardment, and I there ascertained the following facts :

*Belgrade.* I was at Belgrade from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1914. At this date the Austrians had bombarded the town for 56 days and nights. Belgrade is an open town, for its ancient Turkish fortress cannot be regarded as a work of modern defence. It is an interesting historical monument and nothing more. This however did not prevent the Austro-Hungarians from bombarding it freely.

The shells were aimed at private houses, Government buildings and factories without any distinction. Thus the University has been almost wholly destroyed, the Serbian national museum exists no longer, the old royal palace is damaged, as are also the Hotel de la Loterie and the railway station. The state tobacco manufactory was burned to the ground by incendiary shells. Austrian shells struck the Russian and British Legations in spite of the Spanish flag which was flying above them, and the Austrian gunners sent two shots through their own Legation.

I made an examination to see whether the private houses which were damaged or destroyed by the bombardment were situated near the Government buildings, and I have ascertained that for the most part this was not the case. We must conclude that the Austrians were trying to destroy these houses. Sixty State buildings and 640 private houses were struck by projectiles.

Even the hospitals were struck. Thus the State General Hospital was bombarded four times; the private residence

of the governor of the hospital, the operating theatre of the surgical section, which is situated in the courtyard in a special building, and the lunatic asylum were damaged.

I draw the attention of my readers to the bombardment of the university, the national museum and the hospital. The Hague Convention, signed by Austria-Hungary, contains the express stipulation that buildings devoted to science, the arts, and charity must be preserved if they do not serve any military end. These buildings were not being used for any military purposes, and they are not situated in the neighbourhood of buildings whose destruction was necessary for strategic reasons.

I have also discovered some evidence of bombardment by shrapnel shells; in particular the university and its lecture halls are riddled with bullets which have come from these projectiles; I have kept a certain number of them as pieces of evidence. Normally shrapnel is only used in war against enemy forces and never for the bombardment of open towns. The use of such deadly weapons proves that the Austro-Hungarians sought to destroy the civil population of Belgrade.

At the time of my enquiry at Belgrade 25 civilians had been killed and 126 wounded by the bombardment. Among these latter 57 were struck by shrapnel and 87 by shells.

*Chabatz.* I was at Chabatz from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1914. Chabatz is one of the richest towns in Serbia. At the time of my visit it had already been subjected to an invasion by the Austrians, who were driven out after their defeat on the Iadar and Tzer. Since the commencement of the war this town has been bombarded almost daily, and very few civilians have remained in it. The centre of the town had been almost entirely destroyed by ordinary shells and incendiary projectiles. Of the greater part of the houses there remained nothing but the façades blackened by fire. In all, 486 houses had been destroyed or damaged. The bombardment of this open town served no strategic object, for the Serbian positions were outside it.

*Losnitza.* I found at Losnitza the same rage for destruction which had already struck me at Chabatz. I was in this town at a time when there were neither soldiers nor civilians in it, but nevertheless shells, incendiary or otherwise, continued to rain upon it.

The number of houses burnt by the soldiers of the army of invasion is incalculable. Both in town and in country, houses have been burnt without any necessity. At the time of my enquiry in the four divisions of the district of Chabatz alone 1,658 houses had been burnt; namely Potzerski division, 252; Matchvanski division, 457; Asboukavatzki division, 228; Iadranski division, 741. It must be observed that these divisions are agricultural divisions, and that the 1,658 houses burnt are village houses. In consequence of this burning 1,748 families of the four divisions are homeless.

The deposition of the Mayor of Petkovitza, Pantelia Maritch, proves that this burning was deliberately organised by the invading army. He declares that the Austro-Hungarian soldiers had with them little tin pots. They painted with the contents of these pots the houses which they wished to set on fire and then set a light to them with matches. Similar information was given to me in other places.

\* \* \*

### ***Massacres of prisoners and wounded soldiers.***

The Austro-Hungarian army have frequently massacred Serbian soldiers who have been made prisoners. This statement is proved by the evidence of Austrian prisoners, by the official reports of the Serbian military authorities, by the depositions of eye-witnesses, and finally by photographs taken on the spot. I publish below some of these depositions, in which I substitute fictitious initials for the names of my Austro-Hungarian witnesses to avoid the disagreeable

consequences which would otherwise ensue when they return to their own country.

*A. X., of the 16<sup>th</sup> regiment of infantry*, saw in a little wood at Preglevska Tzerkva eleven or twelve Serbian wounded asking for help. Lieutenant Nagj, of the 57<sup>th</sup> Hungarian Regiment, ordered that they should not be helped and even threatened those who wished to help them with his revolver. The Hungarian soldiers cut the throats of the wounded with their knives and bayonets.

*B. X., of the 28<sup>th</sup> regiment of the line*, states that not far from Kroupani a wounded Serbian was groaning under a tree. An Austrian soldier of the 27<sup>th</sup> regiment killed him with a revolver shot.

*C. X., of the 78<sup>th</sup> regiment of infantry*, saw at Chabatz three Hungarian soldiers (a Corporal and two soldiers) leading way a Serbian soldier who was a prisoner to shoot him.

*E. X., of the 28<sup>th</sup> regiment of infantry*. After an engagement near Kroupani E. X. went over the battlefield accompanied by hospital orderlies and found two wounded Serbian soldiers. He wished to take them to the Hülfsplatz (advance ambulance), but the Austrian soldiers refused to bring help to them, and a formal order was necessary to compel them to obey. E. X. accompanied the two wounded. When they passed by the 78<sup>th</sup> Hungarian regiment, the soldiers of this regiment struck the wounded with their fists; and suddenly a regular tumult broke out because the Hungarians wished to finish off the Serbian wounded with their bayonets. E. X. asked for help from the officers, who helped him to carry his protégés to the ambulance.

*Mladen Simitch, native of Bobova, Serbian soldier of the 17<sup>th</sup> regiment of infantry, second company, second battalion*. He was in the trenches with many other killed and wounded when the Austrians arrived. They finished off the wounded. Simitch feigned death, and afterwards succeeded in crawling away and escaping; but the Austrians saw him and fired on him.



*The Commander of the first regiment of Serbian infantry reports (under date 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1914, Acte O, No.280):* Near the Schtiplane river, the Austrians took prisoners about 10 wounded men of the 5<sup>rd</sup> supernumerary regiment. The wounds of these men were dressed. When the Austrians found themselves obliged to leave their positions in consequence of the attack of the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of the 5<sup>rd</sup> Serbian regiment, they shot the wounded in order not to let them be



PLATE 7. — Soldiers of the second Ban killed at Iovanovatz after giving themselves up as prisoners (15<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> regiments; photo. taken on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1914).

retaken alive by the Serbs. The wounded men were found with their wounds dressed, but dead.

At Iovanovatz near Chabatz, about 50 soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ban belonging to the 15<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> regiments (Timok division) surrendered to the Austrians and gave up their arms to them. They were, however, all massacred by the Austro-Hungarian soldiers inside a house (plate 7). A little time afterwards the Serbs on recapturing Chabatz found a heap of corpses in the farm of Iovanovatz. Photographs were taken and wil

form a permanent record of this contravention of all the laws of war.

Sometimes the bodies of wounded soldiers were mutilated before or after their death. Photographs in the possession of the Serbian Government bear witness to this. For example, Captain J. Savitch on the 11/24 August, 1914, photographed the body of a young Serbian soldier from which the Austrians had torn off the skin of the lower jaw.

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*Massacres of civilians.  
Depositions of Austro-Hungarian prisoners.*

*A. X., of the 26<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, deposes as follow : He was ordered, and the order was read to the regiment, to kill and burn everybody and everything met with in the course of the campaign and to destroy everything Serbian. Commandant Stanzer and Captain Irketitch gave orders to attack the Serbian population. Before the second invasion orders were given at Yanja on the 10<sup>th</sup> September to conquer and destroy the country. The civilian population were to be taken prisoners. A peasant who showed the way to the troops was shot by Commandant Stanzer and his soldiers, who fired at him five times. On another occasion a Croatian soldier named Dochan boasted of having killed a woman, a child and two old men, and invited his comrades to come with him to see his victims.

*B. X., of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, states that his superiors gave orders that no one should be spared. First Lieutenant Fojtek, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company, said at Esseg (the garrison town of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment) that it was necessary to show the Serbs what Austrians are. Nothing must be spared and everyone killed.

*C. X., of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, states that First Lieutenant Bernhard said that everything found living must be killed.

R.-A. REISS. — Angl.

Major Belina gave permission to his men to pillage and steal everything they could find.

*Corporal D. X., of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Landwehr*, deposes : At Chabatz the Austrians killed near the church more than 60 civilians who had been previously shut up there. They were massacred with the bayonet to economise ammunition. The work was done by eight Hungarian soldiers. D. X., could not bear to see this sight and left the spot. The



PLATE 8. — Women and old men massacred at Krivaia.

corpses remained on the spot for two days before being buried. Among the victims were old men and children. The order for the massacre was given by the General and the Officers.

*E. X., of the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Infantry*. The Hungarian Captain Bosnai gave orders, before crossing the frontier, that everything living should be killed from children of five to the oldest men. When the frontier had been crossed and the troops arrived at the first Serbian village, the Captain gave orders that two houses should be burned and everyone killed, even the children in the cradle. About 50 women, children and old men were taken prisoners and driven

before the troops during the fight. E. X. saw these civilians wounded or killed by the bullets of the two opposing forces. This appened at Okolischte.

F. X., of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bosnian Regiment. His regiment marching from Lioubovia found at the third village some peasants burnt on the hay by the 100<sup>th</sup> regiment. The order for this massacre was given by Lieutenant-Colonel Krebs, of the last named regiment.

First Lieutenant Stibitch, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> regiment, made observations on the subject to Krebs and asked him the cause of



PLATE 9. — Young persons from 15 to 17 years of age massacred at the village of Glichitch. Notice the wounds at the apex of the skull and the eyes gouged out.

this barbarous execution. Krebs replied that they were comitadjis, and that besides it had nothing to do with him.

G. X., of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Infantry, deposes that during the first invasion the Austrian troops killed all the inhabitants and the wounded. Lieutenant Iekete captured 25 peasants and brought them before his captain. The latter drew them up in a line and kicked each of them. If they cried out they were shot at once.

H. X., of the 28<sup>th</sup> of the Line, states that the Hungarians devastated all the Serbian villages in Sirmia. Captain Eissenhut gave orders to strike down everything living in Serbia.

Mussulman peasants from Bosnia always followed the supply train to pillage.

*I. X., of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Bosnian Infantry.* When his regiment arrived at Zvornik there were some civilian Serbian prisoners, women and children. I. X. gave them some bread, but a corporal saw him and tied him up to a tree for two hours. At Tousla there were also many Serbian civilian prisoners, especially women and children. When these women



PLATE 10. — Family massacred at Krivaia.

went through the town the Croatian soldiers spat in their faces. On the 29<sup>th</sup> September at ten in the evening, 150 fresh civilian prisoners arrived. They were old men, women and children. The women could not drag themselves along any further, and the soldiers drove them on with blows from the butts of their rifles. The soldiers of the 60<sup>th</sup> regiment had taken prisoner a young man of eighteen whom they hanged on a tree.

*K. X., of the 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Infantry.* At Dobritch, on the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> August, K. X. saw soldiers of the 57<sup>th</sup> Hungarian Regiment kill eleven or twelve children from 6 to

12 years of age with their bayonets. The order for the massacre was given by First Lieutenant Nagj. K. X. was 50 or 40 yards from the soldiers who were carrying out the massacre. Lieutenant-Colonel Piskor, of the 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment, passed by at this moment and said to Nagj: « How can you be such swine? » The latter replied: « You can give orders to your own detachment but not to mine. I have orders from my superiors ».

In my collection I have also a series of depositions by other Austro-Hungarian soldiers, who had been taken prisoner by the Serbs, which recount massacres and atrocities committed on the civilian population of the invaded districts, but I believe that these few samples are enough to prove to my readers that even the Austro-Hungarian soldiers confess the crimes that have been committed by a certain number of their comrades, and, what is more important, that in the majority of cases these crimes were committed in obedience to orders given by their leaders (plates 8, 9 10).

I draw special attention to the testimony of H. X., of the 28<sup>th</sup> Line, who says that the Hungarians devastated all the Serbian villages in Sirmia, that is to say in their own territory. Other witnesses confirmed H. X.'s statements, and it appears that the Austro-Hungarian army also committed many excesses in Bosnia. In addition the following document, which was found by the 4<sup>th</sup> Supernumerary Regiment of Infantry and sent on the 25<sup>rd</sup> August (old style) to the Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Serbian army by the Divisional Staff of the Timok Division (second Ban), proves what I have said.

K. u. K. 9 Korps Kommando.

R. N° 52.

Ruma, 14<sup>th</sup> August 1914.

By order of A. O. K. Op. Kr. 259.

In consequence of the hostile attitude of the population of Klenak(1) and Chabatz, hostages will again be taken in all the Serbian villages, etc., even those situated on this side of the

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(1) Klenak is in Hungarian territory.



frontier, which are or will be occupied by the troops. These hostages are to be killed at once in case of any crime being committed by the inhabitants against the armed forces (treason) and the enemy villages are to be burnt. The Commander of the Army Corps reserves the power to burn the villages on our own territory.

This order is to be communicated without delay to the population by the civil authorities.

HORTSTEIN, *general*(1).

\* \* \*

### ***Some official reports by Serbian officers.***

*Lt Draguicha Stoiadinovitch, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Infantry, reports under date of the 9/22 August as follows :*

“ On the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> August, being in command of the advance sentries, my rounds took me to the village of Zoulkovitch and its neighbourhood. I saw in a ravine the bodies of 25 boys from 12 to 16 years of age, and two old men of more than 60 years, heaped one upon the other, mutilated with bayonet thrusts and pierced with bullets. Exploring a house I found in it two dead women; their corpses were riddled with bullets. In another house an old woman lay dead with her daughter. The bodies were in front of the door, half naked, with the legs apart. Near a fireplace, in which the fire had gone out, was seated an old man

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(1) K. u. k. 9 Korps Kommando.  
R. N<sup>o</sup> 32.

Ruma, am 14. August 1914.

Auf Befehl des A. O. K. Op. Kr. 259. Zu Folge feindseligen Verhaltens der Bevölkerung von Klenak und Chabatz sind in allen serbischen Orten auch diesseits der Grenze, die von Truppen belegt sind oder es werden, neuerdings Geiseln auszuheben und bei der Truppe festzuhalten.

Diese sind bei Verbrechen der Einwohner gegen die Kriegsmacht (Anschläge, Verrat) sofort zu justifizieren und in diesen Falle auch die Orte des Feindeslandes niederzubrennen. Das Niederbrennen von Ortschaften auf eigenem Gebiet behält sich das Korpskommando vor.

Dieser Befehl wird durch die politischen Behörden der Bevölkerung sofort kund gemacht werden.

HORTSTEIN, *general*.

covered with bleeding wounds inflicted with bayonets, haggard and dying. He said to me : “ I do not know how it happens that I am still alive. For three days I have sat here, looking on my dead wife and child whose bodies lie before the door; after having covered us with shame they brutally bayoneted us, and then the cowards took to flight. I alone survive, and look on this lake of blood which surrounds me without being able to move a step away’ from it. ”

“ In a courtyard, ” continues the Lieutenant, “ I found a little boy of four years old who had been thrown there after being killed. His body had been partially eaten by dogs. Near him lay a young woman, naked, between whose legs had been placed her nursling child with its throat cut. A little further on an old woman was stretched on the ground. Inside the house on an iron bed there lay contorted by the agonies of death the body of a very pretty young girl whose chemise was covered with blood. On the floor an old woman who had also been killed was just visible under a heap of carpets. On the opposite side of the village I found two old men killed before the door of a little cottage. Opposite the latter two young girls were stretched out dead. The peasants told me that the Austrians had brought all the inhabitants of both sexes, including the children to their camp and ordered them to shout “ Long live the brave Austrian Army ”, “ Long live the Emperor Francis Joseph ”, and all those who refused were shot on the spot. They told me also that the soldiers killed the peasant women for one or two dinars. In one house I found an old woman and her sixth daughters. The mother and four of the daughters were killed, the fifth was wounded and the sixth succeeded in escaping. I talked with these two survivors and during the whole day wounded women and children asked me for medical help. ”

*Lieut. Ievreme Georgevitch, Drina Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Ban*, reports, under date of 12/25 August, that in the Commune of Dornitza, Maxime Vasitch aged 55 was killed in the following way : the unfortunate man was fastened to the wheel of a



mill which was set in motion. Every time the wheel brought him round before the Austrian soldiers, the latter amused themselves by plunging their bayonets into him.

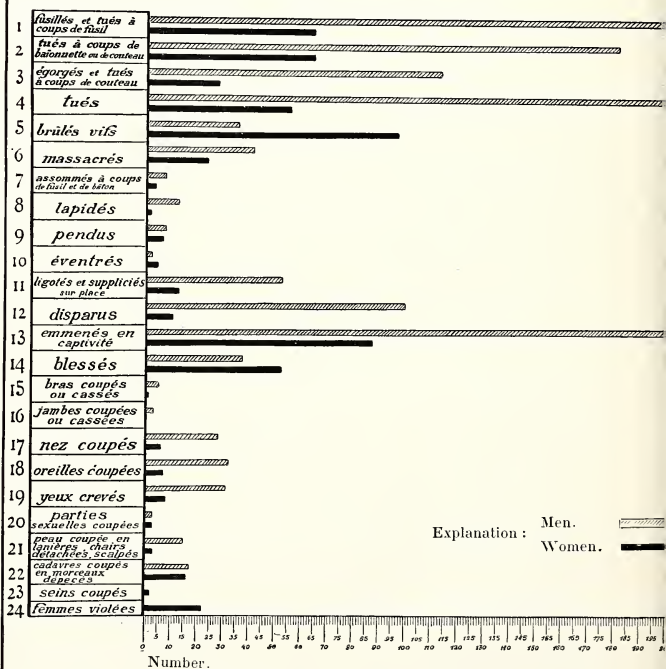
*Captain Stevan Bourmasovitch, commanding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coy, 1<sup>st</sup> Battn, 15<sup>th</sup> Regt of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ban,* reports under date 17/30 August that he himself saw at the village of Bogosavatz a whole family of eight persons who had been killed by the Austrians. An old man lay before a stable. In the courtyard of a house he saw the corpse of a man aged between 40 and 50. Another lay on the road in front of the house. Further on he saw two corpses locked together in a last embrace. A woman told him that these were a brother and sister and that they had been killed together. In one house four children had been killed. They were aged between 8 and 15. An old woman told him that many people had been taken away into captivity.

*Col. Dioura Dokitch, commanding 20<sup>th</sup> Regt of Infantry of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ban,* reports under date 15/26 August as follows : “ In a meadow near the brook on the left bank of the Iadar, immediately below the inn of Krivaia, I saw the following scene : A group of children, girls, women and men, 15 in all, were stretched out dead fastened together by their hands. The majority had been killed with the bayonet. A young girl had been struck with a bayonet in the left jaw, and the blade had come out by the right cheek bone. Many of the corpses had no teeth. On the back of an old woman who was stretched out on her face there was congealed blood in which teeth were found. This old woman lay by the side of the young girl mentioned above. It seems that the old woman was killed first and the young girl immediately afterwards ; her teeth were scattered over the back of the old woman. The chemises of the little girls and young women were covered with blood, which seemed to prove that they had been violated before being killed. Near this group, but apart from it, lay three corpses of men killed by bayonet wounds in the head, neck and the chest ”.

# Enquiry conducted by Professor R.-A. F.

Districts of POTSERIE, of MATCHVA

## STATISTICS



## SS into Austrian atrocities in Serbia 1914

the JADAR and several communes

### ATROCITIES

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1, Executed or otherwise shot. — 2, Bayonnetted or knifed. — 3, Throats cut — 4, Killed. — 5, Burnt alive. — 6, Killed in massacres. — 7, Beaten to death with rifles or sticks. — 8, Stoned to death. — 9, Hanged. — 10, Disembowelled. — 11, Bound and tortured on the spot. — 12, Missing. — 13, Carried off as prisoners. — 14, Wounded. — 15, Arms cut off or broken. — 16, Legs cut off or broken. — 17, Noses cut off. — 18, Ears cut off. — 19, Eyes gouged out. — 20, Sexual parts mutilated. — 21, Skin torn in strips, flesh or scalp removed. — 22, Corpses cut into small pieces. — 23, Breasts cut off. — 24, Women violated.

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*Some evidence by civilians.*

*Deposition of Draga Petronievitch, of Chabatz*, thirty-two years old, a deposition confirmed by the evidence of a number of other women in the same place.

On the 50<sup>th</sup> July (old style) three soldiers came to her house and asked her "Where is your husband". This was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon and no one came back until midnight. At this moment she was with two other women. A Captain and two men arrived and asked her for bombs and rifles. He told her that they were not bad people — "We Hungarians are not bad men," he said, "but you must hoist a white flag over your house." The next day Draga was visited by four Hungarian soldiers who ordered her to follow them. Two women with their children who had Austrian passports were left at liberty. Draga was taken to the Hotel Europa, which was already full of women, girls and children. For five days they were left there shut up without being given anything but a little bread and water. The first night passed off without any incident. On the second night some corporals and sergeants took them into a room aside and asked them "Where are your men, where are the positions, where are the troops?" When the women replied that they did not know they were beaten with blows of the butts. (Two months afterwards Draga Petronievitch had not recovered from the blows she received).

On the following nights soldiers entered the rooms where the women were sleeping and carried off the young girls, one carrying the head and another the feet. If they cried handkerchiefs were stuffed into their mouths; this happened often. From the Hotel Europa the women were taken across to the Hotel Casino and thence to the church where there were already many people. When the church was bombarded by the Serbians, who were returning, the unhappy women were ordered to shout "Long live Hungary". Offi-

cers violated young girls behind the altar. While the bombardment went on the Austrians placed the poor women in the streets, exposing them so that they might be killed by the Serbian shells. Finally they were shut up in the stables of the gendarmerie, and they were there when they were rescued by the Serbians. The Austrians had intended to take them into Austria, but the Serbian artillery had destroyed the bridge and the next day it was too late. The Serbians were there! Some girls had been taken in the evening to the officers and the next day they returned richly dressed with spoil from the wardrobes of the looted houses. Draga gives a list of the names of young girls who had been violated among whom was a child of 14.

Milena Stoitch, aged 16, and Vera Stoitch, aged 14, were taken by the Austrians with many other women. They believed there were about 2000. Some of these prisoners were shut up and the rest taken with the troops. The two girls with their grandmother Ievrasima Stoitch, aged 65, were among the latter. They were compelled to march in front of the soldiers from 1-50 to 7 o'clock in the evening. From time to time the detachment fired and the women were ordered to lie down on an order given in Hungarian. The wife of the chemist Gaitch translated the orders. Among these women there were two or three who had been confined two days before. When the Austrians returned to Chabatatz several shots were fired by the sentries, and the soldiers of Serbian blood shouted to them "Get out of this quick". The soldiers of Hungarian or German blood cried to them "We do not want to kill you. It is your own troops who will kill you".

*Savko Bochkovitch, of Ribari*, aged 65, has two wounds in his chest and three in the right arm. I examined these wounds and found they were inflicted by a bayonet. When the Austrians arrived they called him and led him into the courtyard of his house where there were already two other men — Jivan and Ostoia Maletitch, aged 55 and 65. The so -

diers bayoneted the two Maletitch, and wounded Bochkovitch, who fell and feigned death. He owed his life to this ruse. All over the village there were corpses. The soldiers who committed the massacre did not understand Serbian. Later on another detachment passed through which appeared to be composed of Czechs, who did no harm. The Austro-Hungarians never drank water without first having it tasted.

*Lioubomir Tarlanovitch*, aged 18, was wounded with the bayonet in the back and the right side, and I have examined the wounds. After having been wounded he succeeded in escaping into a field of maize where he was fired at without being hit. His brother Michailo, aged 16, was in the street at the time when the soldiers arrived. A soldier at once wounded him with a bayonet thrust. Michailo fell and the soldiers attacked him furiously, wounding him in fifteen places. Stevania Bochkovitch, aged 40, saw the incident and confirms Lioubomir's statements. The two sons of Tarlanovitch's cousin were also killed.

*Milan Despotovitch*, aged 65, of *Dobritch Donie*, declares that he was with three old men more than 60 years of age and a young boy of 15. The Austrian soldiers bound them together and led them to the village of Schor. There the soldiers put them up against a house and tied them so that they could not move. The house was then set on fire, but by a miracle the flames did not reach the victims.

They were then taken to Losnitza, but on the way rifle shots were fired and the soldiers fled into the maize. They returned and killed Despotovitch's companions with the bayonet. He himself succeeded in escaping. At Schor, when the soldiers were preparing to burn them, they prayed their executioners to kill them outright, but the latter replied that they wished to torture them first.

*Svetko Baitch*, aged 40, of *Dobritch Donie*, deposes that 16 people were killed in his village. The soldiers cut off the nose and ears of Jivko Spasoievitch, aged 60, and then

killed him. Savko Jivanovitch and Ivan Alimpitch, aged 67, suffered the same fate. Pavle Kovatchevitch's face was completely cut to pieces, and he was then shot. Boschko Kovatchevitch, aged 56, had his two hands cut off and his teeth knocked out. The woman Krsmania Vaselitch, aged 62, whose son was killed, begged the soldiers with tears to spare her; she was none the less wounded with bayonet thrusts and I examined the wounds on her arm and hand. Eight persons were taken away whose fate remains uncertain. These massacres took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> August in the morning. The murderers were soldiers who did not speak Serbian.

*Persida Simovitch*, aged 27, inn-keeper of *Kroupanj*. An Austrian Staff with a General and a Major or Colonel was quartered in her inn. She was asked at once to give up "her bombs". They said to her "in your country in Serbia even the women have bombs; give us the bombs". A doctor asked her for eggs for the General. She had none, but in the town she found one which she gave to the doctor. The latter advised her to give it personally to the General who talked Serbian. Persida believes that she owes to this egg the fact that her house was spared. The Major or Colonel was very harsh. Directly the soldiers brought up a peasant he gave the order "to the gallows". She saw 20 peasants hanged before her house. Before hanging them the soldiers beat them violently with the butt end of their rifles and searched them. Usually the bodies were only left hanging until the graves were ready, but one of them remained hanging a whole day. The victims were old men and young people. Persida asked one of the soldiers (Croatians, Germans or Hungarians) who talked Serbian, why they acted in this way. The reply was "we have orders to do so". Four officers also were lodged in her house, and they ordered her to sew together little bags to hold the money taken from those who had been hanged and the prisoners, and that which came from the sack of the town. When she asked them why they took money in this way, the officers told her

that the war cost a great deal and that this money would help their country to bear the expense. The same officers sent her out to look for wine, which she paid for with her own money. They did not pay her back, although they ate and drank all her provisions.

*Iacob Zwdeinovitch*, a peasant of *Banjevatz*, was taken to Bielina on the 4<sup>th</sup> August with his children by the Austrians. Other peasants with their children were also taken there. Zwdeinovitch was sent back into Serbia by the Austrians on condition that he should return on the 16<sup>th</sup> August and make certain reports on the positions of the Serbian troops. If he did not return his children would be killed. He gave himself up to the Serbian authorities, and does not know what has become of his children.

\* \* \*

### ***Some results of my personal enquiry.***

I went through a great part of the Serbian territory which had suffered from the first Austro-Hungarian invasion. Everywhere I have verified so far as possible the statements made to me by witnesses. In the following pages I will set out some typical facts as established by my enquiry. The complete results of this enquiry are contained in a Report which will shortly be handed in to the Serbian Government.

I have already mentioned the deposition of Corporal D. X., of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Infantry, who stated that he had been present at the massacres of 60 civilians near the church at Chabatz. I ascertained that there was in fact a large common pit behind the church of Chabatz, and I had it opened. The pit was 10 metres long and 5 metres 50 wide. At a depth of one metre a quantity of corpses heaped together in different positions were disclosed. Some had their feet uppermost, others lay on their sides, or were doubled up (plate 11).



Everything showed that the bodies were covered with earth just as they fell into the pit. How many of those who were thus buried were alive at the time? The clothes on the bodies, which were still in perfect condition, showed that they were peasants. The arms were bound with rope. The age of the victims, to judge by the bodies, varied between 10 and 80. It was impossible to determine exactly the number

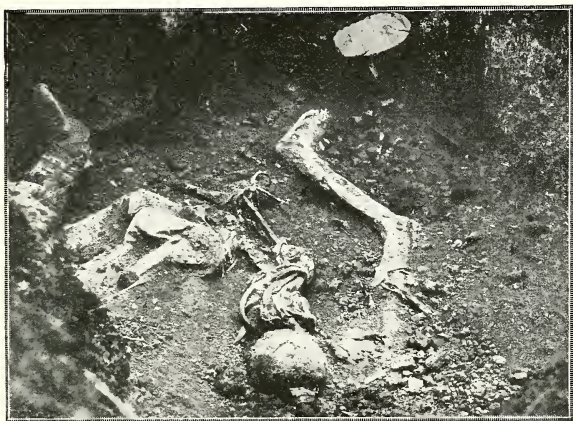


PLATE 11. — Pit opened behind the church of Chabatz. Notice the position of the corpses (legs uppermost) and the rope attached to the arms of one of the victims.

of people buried in this grave. D. X. says that there were more than 60. The inhabitants of Chabatz allege that there were 120. I have personally ascertained that there were at least 80.

At Lipoliste, when the Austrians approached, some villagers took refuge in the house of Thodor Marinkovitch. The soldiers as they passed fired their rifles into the house through the doors and windows; five of the refugees were killed; namely : Thodor Marinkovitch, 60 years of age; Marco Marinkovitch, 19; Rutschika Marinkovitch, 20; Milou-

tine Stoikovitch, 18; Zagorka Stoikovitch, 11; five others were wounded — Dragomir Marinkovitch, 18; Stanoika Marinkovitch, 60; Bogoliud Chataritch, 10; Mila Savkoitch, 6; Marta Stoikovitch, 40. I examined the house and I found several bullet holes in the door and windows and the inside walls. All these shots had been fired from outside the house. I examined and noted the wounds of the surviving victims which were partly healed.

At Petkovitza 24 women and children and six men took refuge in the house of Milan Maritch, which is more solidly built than the others. The Austro-Hungarians made the women come out and massacred the men with their revolvers in a room. Their bodies were searched, and amongst other things a watch and 100 francs were taken from that of Milan Maritch. I found on the floor of the room where the massacre took place, many marks of bullets fired from above; I also found bullet marks on the walls of the same room.

The Austro-Hungarians committed a very great number of excesses in the village of Preniavor, one of the richest in the Matchva. When their troops arrived there, the Commander collected the population together, drew from his pocket a list of the members of the "Narodna Odbrana", the Serbian Patriotic Society, made them step out from the ranks, and had them shot. The men who had been wounded in the two previous wars, and shewed their invalid certificates, were also shot as well as the men who did not answer the Commander's summons. About 500 women were shut up in this inn, and many young women and young girls were violated.

Milan Miloutinovitch's house was totally destroyed by fire. Another building next to it was also burnt. On one of the walls which still remained standing I found many blood-stains and bullet marks. The shape of these stains, which were in very long splashes, showed that the blood had been thrown violently against the wall. A great number of eye-witnesses assure me that the Austrian soldiers brought

there more than 100 women and children, and after murdering them in different ways flung the bodies into Miloutinovitch's burning house.

I searched through the debris of this house and found a great number of human bones carbonised or calcinated. The peasants had already buried the largest pieces in a neighbouring pit. I had this pit opened and ascertained



PLATE 12. — Schoolroom at Preniavor where 17 victims were burnt after being wounded. Notice the splashes of blood on the wall.

that in fact it held a very great quantity of human remains.

At the school at Prenavior 17 persons, most of whom were old people, were burnt in one of the rooms. I inspected the burnt school and found in the room mentioned many large splashes of blood on the walls, and among the carbonised material I found numerous human bones. This proves that the victims were wounded before being burnt (plate 12).

By the side of Michailo Miloutinovitch's house, I opened a common pit containing about 20 corpses. At the top, scarcely covered by the earth, I found the arm of a child of

two or three years of age, still wearing a cheap bracelet of glass beads. On digging deeper I saw the remains of the bodies of women and of children under 10 years of age.

Vladimir Preisevitch, aged 42, owns a house near the church at the place called Zrkvena mala. He had taken in a Serbian trooper who had been severely wounded in an engagement. When the Austrians arrived, Preisevitch took to flight, thinking that they would spare the wounded man. When he came back he found the body of the wounded man tied to the bed and carbonised, the Austrians having lit a fire under it. I inspected the bed which is of iron, and bears very evident traces of fire; the floor underneath it is burnt away over a space measuring one metre by two, and the wall is smoked and blackened.

Near the railway station of Preniavor, a common pit contains the corpses of 25 persons between 20 and 50 years of age, shot by the Austrians. Among the victims there were several women and a certain number of young men who had been invalided from the preceding wars. The Chaplain of the First Regiment, Milan Iovanovitch, who buried the victims, gave me their exact names. I also possess among my documents the names of those who were massacred at Preniavor.

Near the railway station at Lechnitza, there is a large common pit 20 metres long, 5 metres broad, and 2 metres deep. In this pit are buried 109 peasants aged between 8 and 80. They were hostages from the neighbouring villages whom the Austro-Hungarians brought to this place where they had already begun to dig their grave. They were bound together with ropes and encircled by a wire. Then the soldiers took their places on the slope of the railway embankment, about 15 metres from the victims, and fired a volley at them. All of them fell down into the pit, and other soldiers immediately covered them with earth, without ascertaining whether they were dead or only wounded. It is certain that many of them were not mortally

wounded, and some perhaps were not wounded at all, but they were dragged into the grave by the others. They were buried alive. While this execution was going on, a second group of prisoners was brought up, among whom were many women, and when the first party were shot these poor people were forced to shout " Long live Emperor Francis Joseph ". I had this pit opened, and I have satisfied myself



PLATE 15. — The woman Soldatovitch (aged 78) killed and mutilated at Bastave.

by the position of the corpses that the bodies fell pell-mell into the hole. The fact that several corpses were upright seems to show that these victims tried to escape from the pit. The arms of the corpses were bound round with rope.

At Bastave Austro-Hungarian soldiers committed an unspeakable crime which I have been able to investigate by the oral examination of eye-witnesses, the inspection of the spot and photographs of the victims which are in my possession. At the approach of the Austrians the women and children of the village fled to the " Brickfield ". The only

people who remained behind were two infirm women named Soldatovitch, aged 65 and 78. They believed that even the most cruel enemy would spare sick old women. When the peasants returned to the village after the departure of the troops, they found one in her bed and the other behind the door of their room, both of them killed and mutilated. The breasts were cut off and the bodies bore many traces of wounds inflicted with a bayonet or a knife (plate 15). Michaelo Mladenovitch states that the women, who in accordance with the Serbian custom washed the bodies before burial, discovered that the two victims had been violated before being killed.

The few cases cited will be enough to enable the reader to form an idea of the refinements of cruelty with which the Austro-Hungarians have massacred a great part of the civilian population of the invaded territories. In addition, a very large number of civilians have been taken away of whom no news has since been received. Judging by the Austrian "methods" of the *Strafexpeditionen* it is very probable that large numbers of hostages have been killed on the way.

I have several times already spoken of wounded civilians who have succeeded in escaping. I will here only quote two typical examples :

Stanislas Theodorovitch is 15 years old ; he belongs to Mrzenovatz. He was herding cattle when the Austrians arrived. With 5 other peasants, 5 of whom were old men, he was led, bound to the others by ropes, to the Save. Thence they were taken into the interior of the country and at a given moment were all placed on a hay stack, and the soldiers fired on them from a distance of about 4 or 5 metres. Theodorovitch was wounded in the head and in the arm. The wounds in his head necessitated trepanning and the operation was carried out at the civil hospital of Valievo. It was there that I saw and examined the patient.

Stana Bergitch, aged 68, was at Ravagne in her house



when the Austrians arrived. They killed her whole family, consisting of 8 persons, before her eyes, and broke both her arms with blows from the butts of their rifles. She was attended to at the Russian Hospital of Valievo, where I examined her.

At the time of my enquiry 1508 corpses of civilians had been found and identified in the villages and little towns through which I passed. In addition, 2280 civilians had disappeared. Knowing the " habits " of the invaders it may be assumed that at least one-half of those hostages was killed. At this moment part of the district of Chabatz (the greatest part of the Radievski Divisions and a part of the divisions of Iadranski and Absoukovatzki) were still in the hands of the Austrians and, consequently, the full total of the dead could not be ascertained exactly. Further I did not visit all the communes where similar excesses were committed. At the time I estimated that the number of civilians killed in the invaded territory must amount to between three and four thousand.

Official information since received appears to confirm this estimate. The official lists of the civilians who have been massacred are as yet far from being complete. Still it is already possible to form some idea of the extent of the calamity in those of the divisions in which the work of counting the killed and missing has been completed. For instance, in the circles of Iadar, Potserie and Matchva, the number of the killed is 1255. Arranging them according to the age of the victims the following result is obtained :

Less than 1 year	8	9 years..	1	18 years..	59	27 years..	15
1 year...	5	10 years..	5	19 years..	35	28 years..	14
2 years..	6	11 years..	5	20 years..	24	29 years..	4
3 years..	15	12 years..	17	21 years..	29	30 years..	29
4 years..	6	13 years..	7	22 years..	8	31 years..	9
5 years..	10	14 years..	17	23 years..	8	32 years..	10
6 years..	9	15 years..	16	24 years..	7	33 years..	4
7 years..	8	16 years..	28	25 years..	27	34 years..	3
8 years..	6	17 years..	50	26 years..	12	35 years..	19

36 years..	8	50 years..	65	64 years..	16	79 years..	2
37 years..	7	51 years..	15	65 years..	36	80 years..	9
38 years..	15	52 years..	28	66 years..	5	81 years..	1
39 years..	7	53 years..	25	67 years..	6	82 years..	1
40 years..	51	54 years..	51	68 years..	14	83 years..	1
41 years..	8	55 years..	55	69 years..	4	85 years..	1
42 years..	7	56 years..	29	70 years..	55	86 years..	1
43 years..	2	57 years..	15	71 years..	5	89 years..	1
44 years..	4	58 years..	42	72 years..	5	90 years..	4
45 years..	55	59 years..	15	75 years..	1	92 years..	1
46 years..	8	60 years..	79	74 years..	7	95 years..	2
47 years..	11	61 years..	12	75 years..	12	Age unknown..	28
48 years..	55	62 years..	24	76 years..	1		
49 years..	19	65 years..	8	78 years..	2		

Among these victims are 288 women.

The number of those who have disappeared is 554. These were carried away by the Austro-Hungarian troops and nothing has since been heard of them. Among them are a considerable number of women and children.

The kinds of death chosen by the executioners were very varied.

Very often the victims were mutilated before or after death. The following methods of killing and mutilating I have established by evidence : the victims were shot, killed by the bayonet, their throats were cut with knives, they were violated and then killed, stoned to death, hanged, beaten to death with the butt-end of rifles or sticks, disembowelled, burnt alive, or their legs or arms were cut or torn off, their ears or noses cut off, their eyes put out, their breasts cut off, their skin cut in strips or the flesh torn from the bone: lastly a little girl of three months was thrown to the pigs.

In excuse the Austro-Hungarians have alleged that the civilian population of Serbia fired on their troops and that they were in consequence compelled to have recourse to these executions. This excuse is valueless, for in the first place one has only to cast one's eye over the statistical table set out above to see how many of those included in it are



children under ten, old men over sixty, and women, who certainly did not take an active part in the struggle. Secondly I have satisfied myself that about half of the civilians who were killed were not put to death by rifle firing but by blows with the butt-end of the rifle or the bayonet, and that many of them were mutilated in addition. An army which respects the rules of war would never stoop to carry out any execution which had become necessary otherwise than by a firing party, for the worst that can be said against the civilian combatants is that they were defending their country. Finally I found a considerable number of civilians who had been wounded (often very severely it is true) but not killed. If the Austrian statements were true, one would be forced to the conclusion that the enemies of the Serbians had invented a form of semi-execution consisting in wounding without killing.



### *Pillage and destruction of property.*

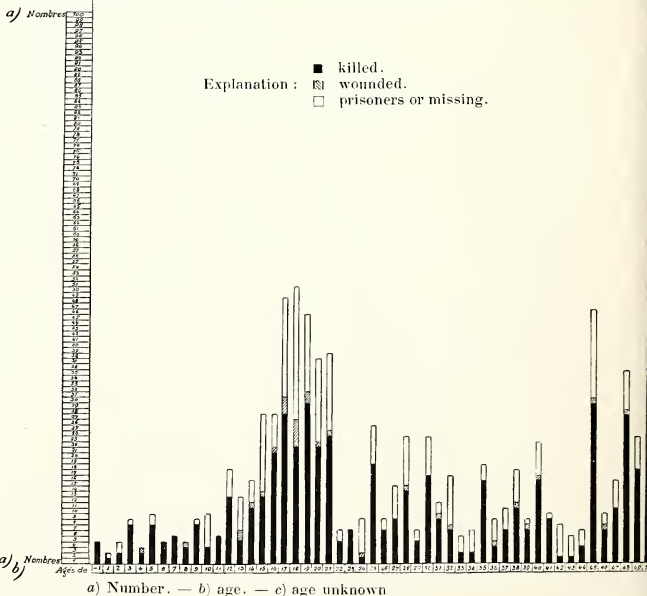
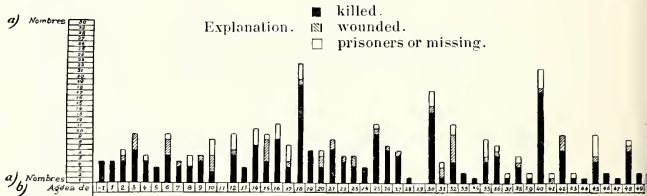
Wherever the invading troops have passed, everything has been pillaged and all moveable property has been destroyed. All objects of value have been carried away and safes broken open.

In the town of Chabatz more than 1000 safes were opened and emptied of their contents. I could only find in the town two safes which remained unbroken, and marks were observed upon them which showed clearly that an unsuccessful attempt had been made to open them. The large total of safes is explained by the fact that these receptacles are much used in Serbia.

Sometimes the safes were forced with extraordinary skill. For example I photographed at the Chabatzka Sadruqa Bank three safes which had been cut open with a professional skill that would excite the jealousy of an expert burglar. Usually the safes, which are of very inferior quality (espe-

# Enquiry conducted by Professor R.-A. R

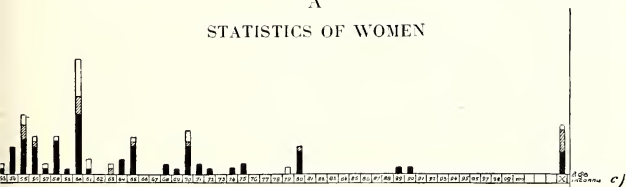
Districts of POTSERIE, of MATCHVA,



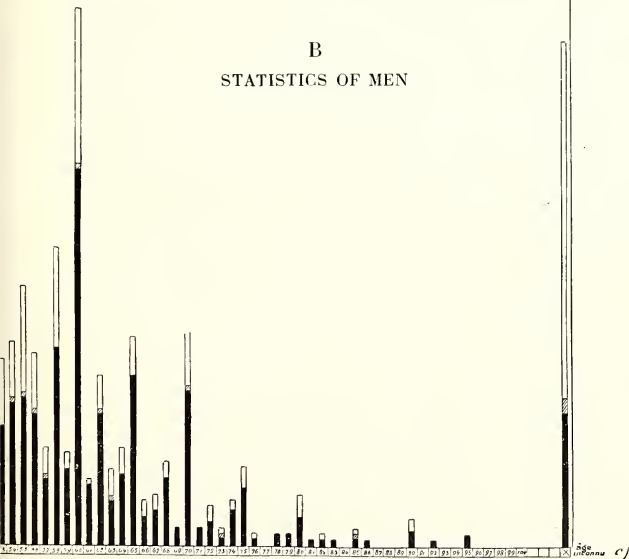
# into Austrian atrocities in Serbia 1914

the JADAR and several communes

A  
STATISTICS OF WOMEN



B  
STATISTICS OF MEN



cially those made in Vienna), were broken in by blows with an axe or by a cold chisel. The typical sign indicating that Austro-Hungarian troops have passed by is a rifled safe lying in the middle of the street.

I examined a very large number of houses, both in town and country, which had been visited by the Austrians. Everywhere I noted that the valuable objects had disappeared, while furniture, wardrobes and linen which could not be carried away were destroyed. Pictures and upholstered furniture are smashed, carpets cut to pieces, crockery broken. The walls are splashed with ink, and the soldiers have left excrement everywhere.

A few examples will illustrate what I have just said :

In the house of Iakob Albala of Chabatz, Poterska Ulitza, everything was broken and ruined. The safe was rifled and the papers of no commercial value which it contained were scattered over the floor. The furniture and crockery were broken, the pictures mutilated. Wearing apparel was taken out of wardrobes, torn and dirtied. All the valuable objects have disappeared. Albala had a fortune of more than 150 000 francs which was deposited in the safe. He fled from Chabatz, and, on learning what had happened in his house, he died of an apoplectic fit. I found his will on the ground. In it he left his whole fortune to the poor of Chabatz without any distinction of religious belief.

Three Hungarian officers were lodged in the house of Dragonir Petrovitch, an Advocate and the Captain of Reserves at Chabatz. They carried away all the silver, notably 48 sets of spoons and forks, and the jewellery and clothes of Mme Petrovitch. The furniture was split open, the clothes torn, the wardrobes and mirrors broken. The carriage was seriously damaged and the papers in M. Petrovitch's office lay scattered on the ground. One night, towards midnight, the officers had the safe carried into the courtyard by their orderlies and had it broken upon. They took out over 10 000 francs worth of stock which it contained.

Everywhere, even on the dining table, they left filth behind them.

I mention as an interesting detail that when the officers returned in the evening they undressed and put on Madame Petrovitch's dresses. Pillagers and perverts!

In the house of the *pope* of Breslak, Maxime Vidakovitch, the Austro-Hungarian soldiers broke and destroyed everything after having taken away all objects of value. Among the things broken were four sewing machines with which the "pope's" daughter used to teach sewing to the village girls. I found the following inscription written over the door of a room: "Pope! if you come back again see what the "Schwabas" (the name given to the Austrians by the Serbians) have done".

The wife of the mayor of Breslak is a native of Berlin and passed her youth in Austria. Everything in her house likewise was stolen or rifled. The family was in easy circumstances and owned very fine furniture and pictures. The furniture was broken, the pictures torn, the linen and silver carried away, the safe broken open. The lady fled with her children when the Austrians arrived. They tried to find her in order to kill her. They bore a special grudge against her husband whom they proposed to "roast". She is very indignant at what the Allies of her native country have done, and told me that although she had formerly been proud of her German origin she is now ashamed of it.

The school of Petkovitza has been completely sacked. The communal archives which it contained are destroyed. The school benches have been overturned or broken, the maps torn and the portraits of King Peter and Prince Alexander torn to ribbons; the schoolmaster's room was pillaged.

The shop of Milorad Petrovitch at Iarebitze was completely sacked. The goods, so far as they have not been carried away, were scattered on the ground and ruined by the paint which the soldiers found in the shop. A sewing machine was broken and the safe, as usual, rifled.

Many fruit trees have been cut down; fruit is one of the sources of wealth of Serbia.

I could go on enumerating hundreds of cases of pillage which I have investigated personally. But it is useless to do so since this would merely be a continual repetition of what I have just said. I must however, lay stress on the fact that wherever the invading troops passed I found filth. Faecal matter was found on the tables, in the crockery, on the floor etc. It would appear that this is a special form of sadism.

\* \* \*

### *The causes of the Austro-Hungarian cruelties.*

After having investigated all these cruelties and atrocities it was a matter of interest to attempt to ascertain their cause. Having known the Austrian people in time of peace and found them, and especially the Viennese, to be apparently of a gentle disposition, I was very much surprised to see that they could commit such excesses in time of war. I therefore endeavoured by questioning prisoners and other methods of enquiry to find out the causes of this change of attitude. I believe the following explanation to be the true one.

Powerful Austria-Hungary had for a long time made up her mind to crush the little democratic Serbian people enamoured of their liberty. Free Serbia was drawing to herself the Austro-Hungarian subjects of Serbian race, and what is more barred the way to Salonika which Austria coveted. It was however necessary to prepare the people of the dual monarchy for this destruction of their inconvenient neighbour. With this object the Austro-Hungarian Press, faithfully supported by the German Press, commenced a systematic campaign of slander against the Serbians. Anyone who read the Austro-Hungarian papers would think that there was no people more barbarous or more execrable than the

Serbians. Savages, thieves, regicides al ready, these detested Serbians were now committing massacres. They were cutting off the noses and ears of their prisoners, putting out their eyes; and mutilating them. Even serious papers repeated such statements as these.

But to prepare the public by means of the Press did not suffice to fill the soldiery with terror of Serbian barbarism. Accordingly the officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, lost no opportunity of drilling into their soldiers the atrocities which it was alleged the Serbians committed on their prisoners. All the Austro-Hungarians taken by the Serbians have assured me that their officers told them that they must not allow themselves to be captured, as the Serbians would murder them. Even the officers believed this fairy-tale. For example, a First Lieutenant admitted to me that at the moment when he was taken, he had pulled out his revolver to shoot himself through fear of being tortured by the Serbians. The instinct of self-preservation got the upper hand, and he added : “ I am now very glad that I did not do it, for Colonel Ilitch ” (this Colonel pays particular attention to prisoners of war) “ is a real father to us “.

The Austro-Hungarian soldiers, when they reached Serbian territory and found themselves in the presence of these people, who had always been described to them as barbarians, were afraid, and they probably committed their first cruelties through fear, so as not to be massacred themselves. But the sight of blood produced the effect that I have often had occasion to observe; man becomes changed into a blood-thirsty animal. A real outburst of collective sadism took possession of those troops — a sadism which those who have been present at a bull-fight have had an opportunity of observing on a small scale. Once the blood-thirsty and licentious animal was unloosed and set free by his superiors, the work of devastation was carried out by men who are fathers of families and probably gentle in their private life.

The responsibility for these acts of cruelty does not rest

then upon the soldiers in the ranks, victims of the wild beast instincts which lies dormant in every man, but on their superior officers, who have made no effort to restrain these tendencies; I will go so far as to say that they have aroused them. What I have already written, as well as the statements of the Austro-Hungarian soldiers which I have published, show the *systematic preparation* for the massacres by officers of superior rank. The following extracts taken from a pamphlet issued by the higher command and distributed among the soldiers afford even better proof of this preparation.

This fantastic document whose German text I translate literally, begins as follows :

K. u. K. 9 Korps Kommando.

*Directions for conduct towards the population in Serbia.*

The war brings us into a country inhabited by a population animated by fanatical hate against us, into a country where murder, as the catastrophe of Sarajevo has proved, is recognised even by the upper classes who glorify it as heroism.

Towards such a population all humanity and all kindness of heart are out of place; they are even harmful, for any consideration, such as it is sometimes possible to show in war, would in this case endanger our own troops.

Consequently I order that during the whole course of the war the greatest severity, the greatest harshness and the greatest mistrust be observed towards everyone (1).

(1) K. u. K. 9. Korpskommando.

*Richtlinien für das Verhalten gegenüber der Bevölkerung in Serbien.*

Der Krieg führt uns in ein Feindesland, das von einer mit fanatischem Hass gegen uns erfüllten Bevölkerung bewohnt ist, in ein Land, wo der Meuchelmord, wie auch die Katastrophe in Sarajevo zeigt, selbst den höher stehenden Klassen erlaubt gilt, wo er gerade als Heldentum gefeiert wird.

Einer solche Bevölkerung gegenüber ist jede Humanität und Weichherzigkeit höchst unangebracht, ja gerade verderblich, weil diese, sonst im Kriege ab und zu möglichen Rücksichten, hier die Sicherheit der eigenen Truppen schwer gefährden.

Ich befehle daher, dass während der ganzen kriegerischen Aktion die grösste Strenge, die grösste Härte und das grösste Misstrauen gegen jedermann zu walten hat.



This is written by an Austrian General representing a Government who attempted, as is well known, to send to the scaffold a number of people, on the evidence of forged documents which had been manufactured at their own legation at Belgrade (1)!

The document goes on as follows :

In the first place I will not allow inhabitants of the enemy's country, armed but not in uniform, who are met either alone or in groups, to be taken prisoners. No consideration is to prevent their execution (2).

The Austro-Hungarian general staff knew, like everybody else, that the Serbian soldiers of the third Ban and a good half of the soldiers of the second Ban have never received uniform. The order in the " directions " is therefore an undisguised incitement to massacre these soldiers, an incitement which has been followed out to the letter by the troops.

Further on, on the subject of hostages, we find these words :

In going through a village, they (i. e. the hostages) are to be conducted if possible until the *queue* (*sic*) has passed through, and they will be executed without any question if a single shot is fired on the troops in the neighbourhood (3).

The officers and soldiers will keep a rigorous watch over every inhabitant and will not allow him to put his hand in his pocket, which probably conceals a weapon. In general they will observe the greatest severity and harshness.

The ringing of bells is absolutely forbidden and the bells are to be unhung; in general every steeple is to be occupied by a patrol.

Divine service is only to be permitted at the request of the inhabitants and only in the open air in front of the church. No sermon is to be permitted on any condition.

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(1) See the Appendix, p. 49.

(2) Zunächst dulde ich nicht, dass nicht uniformierte, aber bewaffnete Leute des Feindeslandes, werden sie nun in Gruppen oder einzeln angetroffen, gefangen werden; sie sind unbedingt niederzumachen.

(3) This is in express contradiction to the Hague Convention of 1908 which was signed by Austria-Hungary.

A platoon ready to fire will be kept near the church during divine service.

Every inhabitant who is found outside a village, especially in the woods, will be looked upon as a member of a band who has hidden his weapons, which we have no time to look for. Such people are to be executed if they appear in the slightest degree suspicious (1).

Here is an incitement to murder. Every man met in the fields is a comitadji who is to be killed!

This document, which I can only describe as an incitement to the massacre of the civilian population, ends with the following words :

Once more discipline, dignity (?), but the greatest severity and harshness (2).

It is now possible for my readers to understand the massacres and cruelties committed by the Austro-Hungarian invading army.

These " directions " are an indictment against those who composed them. In the interests of humanity, in which I have not yet lost faith, it cannot be that these men will fail to expiate their crime!

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(1) Beim Durchmarsch nehme man sie möglichst bis zum Passieren der Queue mit und mache sie unbedingt nieder, wenn auch nur ein Schuss in der Ortschaft auf die Truppe fällt.

Offiziere und Soldaten fassen jeden Einwohner stets scharf ins Auge, dulden keine Hand in der Tasche, welche voraussichtlich eine Waffe birgt, und treten überhaupt stets mit der grössten Strenge und Härte auf.

Keine Glocke darf läuten, nötigenfalls sind die Glocken abzunehmen; überhaupt ist jeder Kirchturm durch eine Patrouille zu besetzen.

Gottesdienst nur über Bitte der Ortsbewohner und nur im Freien vor der Kirche, jedoch unter keiner Bedingung eine Predigt.

Während des Gottesdienstes eine schussfertige Abteilung in der Nähe der Kirche.

In jedem Einwohner, den man ausserhalb der Ortschaft, besonders aber in Waldungen trifft, sehe man nichts anderes als Bandenmitglieder, welche ihre Waffen irgendwo versteckt haben; diese zu suchen haben wir keine Zeit; man mache diese Leute, wenn sie halbwegs verdächtig erscheinen, nieder.

(2) Nochmals : Mannszucht, Würde, aber grösste Strenge und Härte.

## APPENDIX

### TRIAL OF AGRAM

The Austrian documents referred to on page 47 are those which were produced at the trial of Zagreb (Agram) March-October 1909. On the information of an *agent-provocateur*, Nastitch, the Ban of Croatia, acting by order of the Government of Vienna, caused the arrest of 58 persons whom he accused, on evidence of a most flimsy character, of working in connivance with the Cabinet of Belgrade to bring about the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The trial, which was conducted in a most scandalous manner and provoked the indignation of the whole of Europe, had been instituted by the Chancellor, Baron d'Aerenthal, who, at the time of the annexation of Bosnia, attempted to compromise Serbia and incite public opinion against her. The Deputies of the Diet of Croatia brought a charge of libel before the Court of Vienna against the historian Friedjung (one of the signatories of the manifesto of the German intellectuals), who had denounced them in the *Neue Freie Presse* as being guilty of high treason. It was proved before the Court of Vienna by positive and incontestable evidence that the documents, on which Friedjung based his assertion and which had been communicated to him by the office of the Chancellor, were forged by a certain Vasitch by order of Count Forgach, the Austrian Minister in Serbia. Friedjung was compelled to acknowledge his mistake. M. d'Aerenthal, questioned before the Committee, had, on his part, tacitly to admit his responsibility. He declared that he had never believed in the authenticity of these documents. « If » remarks M. Steed (« La Monarchie des Habsbourgs », French translation, page 391) « Russia had not again given her support to Serbia, whereby war was avoided, there would no longer have been any hope of throwing light on the schemes of Aerenthal, for Austria would have invaded Serbia and caused the execution, under martial law, of the Serbo-Croatians whom the forged documents accused of treason ».

Count Forgach who, in the month of August 1914 was the principal collaborator of Count Berchtold, renewed, after the assassination of François Ferdinand, the very same schemes which had miscarried in 1909.



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